

# Citizen

MIREYA BELTRÉ

What does it mean to be a ciudadano?  
I cannot hide beneath my skin.  
It is dark and absorbent and resilient yet soft...  
It is open it is truthful it is rock  
Hard.  
It endures the glare.  
Mi piel es ligera...  
My skin balances on tip toes and shoots through  
hoops  
And is scantily clad, sexified, objectified in four  
inch  
Military boots..!  
De habla Hispana, mi cara Africana  
I am many things in what you see...  
My skin honors love, and laughs in the face of your  
apathy.  
It is girls it is boys, it is both and it suffers  
And when it finally cries...  
It listens.  
Toca el tambor, canta toda canción

Both proud and old, my skin is young;  
It is wise, and trusts neither right  
Nor left  
To their devices.  
It understands wrong...  
It hungers for thought when fed pollution and hate

It breathes emotion under molten weight  
It bears its fate with dignity, sometimes.  
It hates.  
It can never be perfect although it tries;  
Though it tires of words and bullets and lies,  
It thrives.  
I am a citizen...  
What does that mean?  
That I give up my skin..?  
Never...